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TO: Tam Doduc, Chair
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FROM: Karl E. Longley, PE
Member, CVRWQCB

SIGNATURE: original signed by Karl E. Longley

Dan Odenweller
Member, CVRWQCB

DATE: 2 May 2006

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SUBJECT: SALINITY COMMITTEE REPORT RECOMMENDATIONS

Since its formation following the joint workshop addressing salinity in the Central Valley that was held on January 31, 2006, The Salinity Committee has met several times and considerable input from members of the committee have been incorporated into the below recommendations and the attached report. However, the specific recommendations were finally developed by the undersigned.

Members of this committee include:

- Karl Longley, Central Valley Water Board Member & Committee Chair
- Michael Boccadoro, Senior Vice President, The Dolphin Group
- Celeste Cantu, Executive Director, State Water Board
- Pamela Creedon, Executive Officer, Central Valley Water Board
- Steve Chedester, Executive Director, San Joaquin River Exchange Contractors
- Jerry Johns, Deputy Director, Water Resources Planning & Management, DWR
- Steve Macaulay, Executive Director, California Urban Water Agencies
- Jerry Meral, Environmental Public Policy Expert
- Dan Odenweller, Central Valley Water Board Member

I thank the State Water Board and Central Valley Water Board staff instrumental in the development of this report for the great effort. The staff involved included:

- Central Valley Water Board staff listed as authors of the report
- Les Grober, Environmental Program Manager, State Water Board
- Tom Howard, Chief Deputy Director, State Water Board
- Gordon Innes, Senior WRC Engineer, State Water Board
- Beth Jines, Deputy Director, State Water Board
- Ken Landau, Assistant Executive Officer, Central Valley Water Board
- Barbara Leidigh, Counsel, State Water Board
- William Rukeyser, Director of Public Affairs, State Water Board

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- Vicky Whitney, Chief, Division of Water Rights, State Water Board

The attached document provides a summary of the salinity problem in the Central Valley, identifies the most significant sources, and provides an approximation of the amount of salt generated by many of these sources. While the Central Valley is being addressed as a single entity, excessive salinity generated in one region of the Central Valley and discharged into a surface source may have impacts downstream of the point it was discharged (e.g., on a municipal water supply or a Delta ecosystem). Where saline waters and other wastes are discharged to land, they can have a deleterious impact on ground water supplies within a relatively short period of time when the intervening soil column is highly pervious, a condition prevalent on the eastern side of the Central Valley. Saline waters originating in the Central Valley also have impacts elsewhere in California where the benefits of their use is diminished by increasing salinity. Consequently, when considering impacts one must consider a large number of factors as is pointed out in the attached report.

This effort will not be easy. The necessary updating of the basin plans to address salinity issues will be an expensive and lengthy process with the source of funding for this effort being unknown at this time. Design, construction and operation of infrastructure necessary to control salinity also will be expensive. This effort will require the work of many agencies and interests, and that work will take a very long time, conceivably many decades for full implementation. Failure to control salinity, however, will result in continued decline of Central Valley water quality at an enormous cost to all water users, eventually creating even greater hardship for the environment, agriculture, industry, municipal utilities, and the entire economy of the Valley and the State. A very conceivable result if we are not successful in this effort is the stagnation and/or decline of the Valley economy with loss of jobs and opportunity for many, many Valley residents.

The following recommendations represent important steps towards achieving a viable, effective salinity management plan for the Central Valley. Successful completion of this initiative will require considerable resources available in a timely manner and active participation by all stakeholder groups (an example of a similar successful program is Santa Ana Watershed Project Authority (SAWPA)).

1. Establish and identify funding during May 2006 for a Salinity Study Task Force to provide oversight, supervision, and approval of a study to evaluate the impact of salinity on water resources and to develop a viable salinity management plan. Elements of the salinity management plan will include:
 - Applicable data from other organizations and individuals will be collected, validated, and consolidated; remaining data gaps will be identified; and, the necessary relational parameters will be developed to accurately characterize salt transport and storage. This effort will include the development of an extensive modeling program.
 - Potential measures that can be implemented to better manage salinity will be identified and interim and long-range salinity management plans will be developed and fully evaluated.

- An effective salinity management plan should include the development of a management organization (e.g., a Joint Powers Authority or a Special Commission), physical infrastructure, and changes to the current basin plan and other regulatory programs.
2. Sponsor a follow-up joint State Board/Regional Board Salinity Workshop to receive comments on the report and potential information/data gaps, to discuss recommendations, and to receive input and directions for future steps (June 2006).
 3. Conduct facilitated meetings to gather more public input and information for the process (Begin August 2006).
 4. Contract for the preparation of an economic study of salinity impacts and the social and economic consequence of not implementing a viable salinity management program (October 2006).
 5. Sponsor a full-day conference that will highlight the major salinity-related issues and their statewide impacts (November 2006 with preparation beginning May 2006).

Enclosure: *Salinity in the Central Valley, An Overview*, May 2006, Central Valley Water Board

cc: State Water Resources Control Board Members
Central Valley Regional Water Quality Control Board Members
Salinity Committee Members
State Water Board and Central Valley Water Board staff listed above